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The Reverend Mr. *GOLDWIN*'s

# SERMON

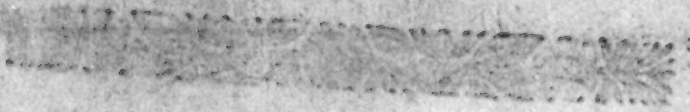
Preach'd at

*St. Nicholas's* Church

IN

*BRISTOL*, 1734.





The Reverend Mr. Goodwin

# SERMON

By Mr. Goodwin



1754

*The LIGHT of an exemplary LIFE.*

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A  
**SERMON**

PREACH'D at

*St. Nicholas's Church*

IN

*BRISTOL, 1734.*

Before a SOCIETY of young Gentlemen educated at the Grammar School in that CITY.

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By the Rev<sup>d</sup> Mr. *WILLIAM GOLDWIN*,  
formerly Master of the School, now Vicar  
of *St. Nicholas*, and Fellow of *Eton-College*.

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L O N D O N:

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SERMON

St. Andrew's Church

BRISTOL



By the Rev. J. H. ...  
of St. Andrew's Church, Bristol

Printed for W. ...  
Bristol





GENTLEMEN,



SINCE you have made it your *turn* to lay your commands upon your old Master, to preach and publish on this first appearance of the School-Society, I venture into publick view on that request; you set the *les-son*, and I was obliged to perform my *part*; and tho' this small performance may run the common fate of most Sermons and Pamphlets, to be lash'd, dislik'd, and forgot, yet the *generous mark* of your gratitude and affection, together with the inexpressible satisfaction I had to see, after an interval of  
of

## DEDICATION.

of near twenty years, such a growth, of my planting, before me, make me ample amends: only masters and parents feel the inward joy of such sights and improvements.

I hope also the subject and contents of this discourse will not displease, because every body pretends at least to be a friend to good example and education: this recommends both; and, as such, may it answer its design and your expectation, and do you as much good, as is heartily intended by

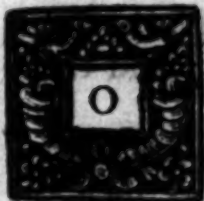
*Your now most obedient Servant,*

**William Goldwin.**



St. MATTHEW v. 16.

*Let your light so shine before men, that  
they may see your good works, and  
glorify your Father, which is in  
heaven.*



OUR Saviour in a foregoing verse calls his disciples *the light of the world*, set up as eminent examples to the Jews and Heathens, to provoke them, by a spirit of emulation, unto love and good works; because the true Christians by their exemplary virtue were bound to mend the morals of the wicked Gentiles, and by their new commandment of universal charity, to teach the narrow *Jews* to extend their love beyond their own tribes and nation.

Now

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Now exemplariness of life was a proper intention of a Religion, that was to go into all lands, *beginning at Jerusalem*; Christ therefore would not suffer his followers to hide their light in an *Hermit's* cell, nor bury themselves and actions in a *monastick* life; a retirement useless and unfruitful, no ways tending to propagate the Gospel among all nations. Hence he compares this recluse manner of life to a lighted *candle put under a bushel*, hid in obscurity, and casting no influence on the world, and from that comparison he adds the direction in the Text:

*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father, which is in heaven.* Which words direct me to show,

*First*, Why every Christian ought to set a good example before the world. And then,

*Secondly*, For the sake of *this audience*, I shall lay before you, what sort of men, in their respective stations of life, are obliged to let their light shine before men.

And under this head I must mention some particular professions, because I once had the honour and pleasure to have an hand in your education, to prepare you for those callings,



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callings, and now the greater satisfaction to see you flourishing in those creditable stations: and tho' I am now acting in another capacity, but still a teacher for *doctrine, for reproof, and instruction in righteousness*, I shall take the freedom to recommend the duty of mixing virtue with literature, that by the light of a good life ye may all shine in the different spheres wherein ye move; and tho' *one may differ from another in glory*, yet all contribute your share to *glorify your Father, which is in heaven.*

And tho' gratefully and generously on your side, you obliged me to be *once more* your Instructor, yet remember to honour a far, far greater Teacher, *a Teacher sent from God*. Because a sense of Religion is the chief end of all education, and much superior to all other accomplishments; not but that both goodness and politeness may concur to man's great design, the *wisdom unto salvation*. For St. Paul is a famous instance of the happy mixture of those two strong colours, zeal and learning. How good the Apostle! how learned the Man! how sound in faith and doctrine! how clear in reasoning! how elegant in style! how mighty in the Scriptures! and yet how well versed in the polite

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lite authors! He was bred up at the feet of Gamaliel, a master in Israel; he was called *Mercurius*, because he was the chief speaker, as if they thought him the God of wit and eloquence; and yet he counted all these things but *dung and loss* for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. So happily and usefully may the Christian and the Scholar meet together, and make the same person both good and great: but still let religion have the right hand of fellowship.

But to return, and begin with the first general proposition.

*First* then, A Christian must set a good example, because the Religion he professes is more excellent than any other before and since its Establishment. He is to convert the *Jew*, to lighten the *Gentile*, *Mahometan* and *Infidel*. And what will so soon make a Profelyte, as his own holiness of life? What a more convincing argument to persuade an Unbeliever, than to testify the sincerity of our faith by good works? Practical Virtue carries its own weight and force. We can't pretend to draw a Heathen from his vices, if we indulge ourselves in the same: we must have our *conversation honest among the Gentiles*,

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*tiles*, if we propose to encourage honesty among them. If we swear and blaspheme in their hearing, can we expect they will honour God's holy Name and Word? If they find us *committing all uncleanness with greediness*, will that teach them chastity? If we act a cruel or fraudulent part among them, can we hope ever to find probity or humanity from their hands?

So as to *Jews*; Can we press them to believe and obey Christ, and the Gospel, if we don't *order our conversation as becometh the gospel of Christ*? Physician, heal thyself, will be the reply: for example carries the strength of an argument; and with the illiterate, a religious life, just dealing, merciful usage, and modest conduct is more prevailing than all the powers of *Logic* and *Oratory*; because the lowest understanding is a judge of good actions, tho' not of learning. For the benefit therefore of enlarging Christ's kingdom, and for the honour of revealed religion, *by daily adding to the Church them that are without*, every Christian should let his light shine before the unconverted part of the world.

There is also a reason among our selves, why each Christian should be



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exemplary in his religion, in order to encourage one another in our duty.

For every Age has wickedness enough in it to sink religion into disuse and contempt; the good members therefore of Christianity must keep up the spirit of godliness, as a balance against vice. *Who will take my part, says David, against the wicked?* He call'd upon all the lovers of God and virtue to discountenance immorality by appearing on the side of religion: for one man's goodness is a spur of emulation to another. If no other principle stirs up their zeal, a sense of shame promotes the good work; and a neighbour's pattern will raise at least a desire of imitation.

And sure if the *evil men and seducers* form combinations to attack and undermine religion in all its branches, men of faith and virtue ought to defend the truth, and with mutual assistance support the interests of Christianity by publick example, and practical piety. *As iron sharpeneth iron, so doth the countenance of a man his friend,* says Solomon; the true friends to religion, if they set a noble pattern publickly, give an encourage-



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encouragement to a good cause, and spread the influence of a light so shining in good works far and near.

For the beauty of a *righteous, sober, and godly* life is so charming, that it will attract the eyes and esteem of the world, and then men naturally imitate what they think agreeable.

From bare reading in the books of sacred Authority, of the patience of *Job*, the faithfulness of *Abraham*, the wisdom of *Solomon*, the penitence of *David*, the charity of *St. John*, and the zeal of *St. Paul*, we are charmed with their singular graces; how much more would our admiration have been raised, if those eminent patterns, with all their worthy deeds, had been the objects of our eyes? if the copy strikes us, the original must be more glorious. The light of the body is the eye, the eye takes in the affection for objects, and conveys it to the heart for our approbation, and to the brain to form an idea and imitation of it.

Such a persuasive force visible examples bear over the hearts of men; consequently an excellent pattern of goodness

### 8. *The Light of an exemplary Life.*

ness in any age or place carries a mighty sway and influence on the conversation of his cotemporaries; for good leaders seldom want followers. So that the promotion of Christianity among disbelievers, and the support of it among those that profess a belief of it, are two good reasons, why every one should let *his light shine before men.*

A third reason is for the sake of a man's own credit and satisfaction. *The ways of religion are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths peace;* and as you can't but remember, how the old Romans placed the two temples dedicated to virtue and honour, the only road to that of honour was through the gate of virtue. Now nothing is more honourable than exemplariness of life, whether it appears in a steady faith and a good conscience, in the double charity of heart and hand, or in a constant course of devotion; in these praise-worthy steps, as the *good man is satisfied from himself,* (the inward reward of virtue) so the reputation of being a good precedent is great and lasting; *the praise of it endureth for ever.* 'Tis a monument not to be defaced by the teeth of envy, or time itself.

And

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And if 'tis reckon'd a mark of publick esteem, to be distinguish'd for ingenuity, wealth, strength or beauty; nay, if we ourselves affect a pre-eminence on these accounts, and are fond, even to a pride, to be as leaders in affairs of less concern than religion, let us do virtue the same justice; let us aim to be as exemplary for faith, love and piety, as for any other endowment. 'Tis an higher character *to be a Christian*, than illustrious in any other view; and more honourable to shine before men with justice, humility and mercy, than to dazzle the world with *the pride of life*, the vain pageantry of riches and honours.

Let then a sense of reputation, which in life is a common motive to other laudable actions, be our spur also for exemplary religion.

I come now to consider some stations of life, wherein men are particularly obliged from their very office and situation to set bright examples to all that move in a lower sphere.

*First*



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*First* then, Kings, *as supreme*, are under a strong obligation to give a good example by personal holiness, by countenancing the religion of the land they govern, by giving a sanction and execution to the laws against vice and profaneness, by *doing justice, and loving mercy*. Because the practice of high authority is the rule of a whole nation's behaviour; and if Princes justly expect that their subjects should *render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's*, nations humbly desire of them, that they would *give unto God the things that are God's*; viz. worship and honour, that religion may flourish from the crown of the head to the sole of the feet. For a station of power is given to advance God's glory, and the publick good; a religious pattern does both, and the *principalities and powers that be*, who are said to be *ordain'd of God, as his ministers for good*, are never so truly representatives of God, as when they are holy, merciful, and just. Virtuous actions are the true divine image and superscription, because they imitate the attributes of the *great Being*, and do good to mankind by beneficence and diffusive love. Hence one of these higher Powers



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ers in the *East*, *Solomon*, who was an instance and judge of Government, said, *When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice.*

The next persons obliged to lead exemplary lives are subordinate Magistrates, or *Governors sent by their Principals* to exercise a delegated power over particular provinces and cities. Now these are to the several parts, what Kings are to the whole, and their good or vicious conduct will affect the morals of the places where they reside; for inferiors look upwards to their superiors for a rule of action; and if they find the civil powers stain'd with acts of injustice, intemperance, or profaneness, the lower rank of mankind will be too apt to commit the same vices; nay, they will expect impunity, because those that are to punish, are notoriously guilty of the same crimes. Hence *St. Paul* observed to the *Romans*, *Thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art, that judgest; for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest, dost the same things.*

Lawful obedience is indisputably the Magistrates's due, because 'tis a deputed  
C branch

## 12 *The Light of an exemplary Life.*

branch of the highest powers in most countries; but then they must be just as well as great, if they expect regard: they must honour themselves and their stations by laudable deeds, if they expect honour from others; as 'tis written in the book of *Ecclesiasticus*, *Who will honour him, that dishonoureth his own life?* For 'tis not only the bench of authority, but 'tis uprightness with it, that calls forth the true respect of the world; 'tis not only the execution of power, but 'tis the publick example of a religious life; 'tis not the robe only, but the Man, cloth'd with righteousness and integrity, that will command inferiors to honour and obey civil power.

Now under this article in behalf of Magistracy, there is no room for an application in the present case, because time has not yet ripen'd you for that class of authority; yet as ye have learned from children those Scriptures, which teach obedience to Kings, and all in authority, let me put you in mind to obey Magistrates; and, in these days of wickedness and unreasonable disaffection, shine forth in Loyalty; and for your oath and country's sake, honour the King and the Protestant Succession, by leading quiet  
I and

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and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty, by making the laws of God and man, the constant rule of your conduct.

But sure the Magistrates of this City have a special claim to your respect, because the school of your education, where, I hope, you imbibed some principles of duty and knowledge, was under their guardianship and inspection.

The next persons under great and solemn obligations in virtue of their office to *let their light shine before men*, are the Ministers of God's word and sacraments.

Now as *these are taken from among men to be ordained for men to minister about holy things*, 'tis natural and proper to expect religion from persons dedicated to divine services; and as the value of religion rises or sinks in proportion to their profession and practice of it, their example is necessary to give it a credit and recommendation to others: if the fountain is corrupt, the streams will partake. We find the old Prophets throwing part of the blame and cause of *Jerusalem's* sins and ruin on the iniquities



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quities of the Priests. Fraud or lewdness, swearing or disloyalty, ingratitude, pride or uncharitableness, are as unnatural in point of character and decency, as pernicious to the *people committed to their charge*. For a publick station always draws the attention and imitation of those below; and where there is a settled opinion of men having more power and knowledge than themselves, if they find those two vast advantages perverted to vile uses, the world, from seeing such talents misemployed, will judge of *the wicked and slothful servant*, and argue themselves into irreligion and contempt of sacred things and persons too: so necessary is it, *that the Priests be clothed with righteousness*.

Besides, with what grace, with what hopes of success, can the preachers of the Gospel, who are bound *to tell the people of their doings*, rebuke their hearers for their vices, if they themselves do the same works of darkness? *They say, and do not*, will be the stone cast at us. A guiltless conscience can reprove boldly; and *Felix will tremble under a lecture of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come*, where the Preacher stands clear in the sight of God and men; but



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but discourses of virtue from the mouth of the ungodly will meet with but an odd reception. Thus St. Paul, *Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery?* The name of God is blasphemed among the unrighteous through such teachers.

Let then those among you, whose lot and honour it is to *wait at the altar*, be holy not only by ordination and function, but in life, and show your faith by your good works; convince the world of the sincerity of your hearts in all the obligations, divine and human, ye have sworn to, by a suitable observance: the world can't see your consciences, but they can your good or evil deeds. I need not tell you, that our Saviour compares such to the *salt of the earth*, that they might keep themselves and others sound and pure. He calls them also, *the light of the world*, *set as a city on a hill*, to cast a light, and direct others *in the way they should go*; and, to secure exemplary conduct in persons call'd to the Ministry, St. Paul enjoins this rule, *In all things shew thyself a pattern of good works*. A direction that comes up to the words and sense of my text.

But further; As these in high offices and holy orders, so men of learned education,

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cation, whatever professions they undertake, owe God and the world the light of a good life, to countenance religion, and prevent the increase of vice. For inferi-  
ors, when they observe men, bred to letters, practise no branch of virtue, soon learn to commit wickedness, the vulgar being more apt to follow bad precedents than good ones; because corrupt nature, guided by authority also, carries them into that stream of iniquity, tho' at last it drowns them in perdition.

Now the seats of arts and sciences, where *some of this Society* improved the first rudiments, are supposed to be nurseries of virtue as well as learning, where an opportunity is given to fill and enrich the soul with both moral and christian graces, and at the same time cultivate the mind with increase of academical knowledge; for learning is to advance religion, and religion to adorn learning: these two, like the *Crown and Mitre*, must support each other. Hence *Solomon*, the great master of as much learning as *Jerusalem* then contain'd, yet gave the first fruits of his thoughts to the wisdom of morality, calling it in his *Proverbs*, chap. iv. 7. *the principal thing*. And indeed if we take a view of many parts of human learning, what are they without religion? What is  
a skill

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a skill in *Geography* and *Astronomy*, which comprehends the heavenly and earthly globe, except we also adore with holy worship *the great God, who in the beginning created the heaven and the earth?* Or what is *Chronology* and *History*, those useful registers of time and past transactions, unless we also remember and serve that one eternal God, who knoweth all things, *who was, and is, and will be* both before and after time itself? Or what is *Anatomy* and the art of *Physick*, which search into the mystery of human body in all its parts and distempers, unless the artists think with reverence, with gratitude and godly fear on the divine finger, by which we are *so fearfully and wonderfully made*, and who it is that has the sole power to *kill, and to make alive?* Or what is *Navigation*, an art some of you are acquainted with, which, under God, almost commandeth the winds and seas, except *those that go down to the seas in ships, fear and praise the Lord for his wonders in the deep?* Or what is the study of the Law, *civil and common*, so useful to the interests of the Constitution, and the rights of Subjects, except we crown all with the knowledge and practice of the one Lawgiver's moral and christian Law? Nay, what is the study of *Divinity* itself, especially the speculative part, unless the *Divines* add also the practical,



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etical, and not only *search the Scriptures*, but obey the Gospel-precepts? In a word, what is that nice knowledge of the *Mathematicks*, with all its *Algebra* and figures, unless the men of that genius pay their duty to God, the great Mathematician of all things, who made all his works in exact *Proportion, Weight, Measure, Figure and Number*? Or what is the refined art of *Politicks*, which claims the governance and balance of nations in war and peace, except the statesmen implore the help of that *only wise God, the King of Kings*, who by a death or a birth, by the turn of a Prince's heart; by the *madness of the People*, by a contrary wind, or a pestilence, can overturn all human schemes? So necessary and ornamental in every science is a due sense of religion; so just and grateful is it for men of parts and education to be *wise also unto salvation*, as the best way to make the Giver of all good gifts some returns. Ingenuity and Improvements are designed for God's glory, who expects a good use of the talents; *much being always required, where much is given*: so that if persons well educated live in scandalous vices; if they debauch themselves and others, themselves with excess, and others with uncleanness; if they neglect all publick duties of religion, they are in some measure answerable for the irreligion of others,



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others, who will too readily imitate superiors, tho' in a bad fashion. Such disparage the places of their education, & such abuse the gifts of God, throwing them back, as *the swine did the pearls*, with scorn on their kind benefactor. How ought such to be *beaten with many stripes, who know their master's will, and do it not!*

Give me leave to mention the Practitioners in Law, Physick, and Surgery, because some of you are engaged in these honourable and useful employments.

Now besides the free use of Scripture and Reason, the open means of grace, and the benefits of a liberal education which they have in common with other people, the very business of each profession should incline them to religion. The finger of God is so visible in the dissection of dead bodies, that those of the physical faculty can't but see and believe the glorious handy-work of a wise Creator. They can't but observe the virtues and operations of medicines on the living, which were made by God for the service of men. Can they help seeing the hand of God in inflicting many diseases beyond the compass of Art, and as many surprizing recoveries by the pure will and power of God, after all art is at a stand? Don't they see the decaying  
D state

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state of nature and mortality in various shapes every day? How then can they forget God,\* or their own latter end, and a judgment to come, for which there is no remedy, but a religious life?

Let then those among you of the physical line, that have the care of human bodies, think beyond natural religion and *second causes*; believe that there is an immortal soul, as well as a corruptible body, and a future state of spiritual existence, full of joy or pain, when flesh and blood are no more.

So likewise the study of the *Law* may lead men into a religious course. For they find most human laws are grounded on divine precepts, the laws of *Moses* and *Christ* being the foundation of many excellent statutes. They can't but learn a deep sense of morality and justice, from seeing so many laws pertaining to right and wrong: they can't but think on God as a Judge, and a state of punishments in another world, from the necessity of punishing crimes here on earth for the better government of mankind, that the world may *stand in awe, and sin not*.

So that as education gives them knowledge, their profession should engage them

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them to live under the sense and fear of a just God, that will one day hold a grand assize, and judge the world in equity and truth by the evidence of revelation and conscience: the two witnesses that can't be corrupted.

Wilful sins against knowledge, and *the law of our minds*, are the highest offences; and light turned into darkness, *how great is that darkness!* I apply therefore St. Paul's words, *Thou that boastest of thy knowledge, dishonourest thou God thro' knowledge?*

Let then this Profession consider, that there is an unrepealable law of God and conscience to be regarded, as well as the laws of their country, and a greater Judge to appear before, than the highest judicature on earth, and thence learn strict justice and integrity in all their actions.

Thus then, I hope, it appears, that *Kings, Magistrates, spiritual Pastors, and men of education* in other learned faculties, owe the benefit and light of a good life, exemplified by virtuous deeds, to their fellow-creatures, not only for the publick honour and present interests of Christianity *militant here on earth*; but



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for the advantage and encouragement of others, who see the patterns of good works, that they may go *and do likewise.*

I might also add, how the heads of Societies, the masters of floating families at sea, or large households at land, are bound in conscience and in justice to those under their care, to show publick tokens of religion, that a vein of good morals may run from the head thro' the whole body. Example is as powerful as the authority of any ruler, and will command where curses and severity lose their force. But as the Obligations and Reasons for exemplariness of life in these instances are much the same as in the other cases, I pass on to consider, how God's glory is concerned in the light of a good example, which includes the latter clause of the text.

Now, 1<sup>st</sup>, our heavenly Father is glorified by exemplary religion, because it tends to spread his Name in all the world; it teaches the ignorant, it corrects the vicious, and often reforms them: for an example of a blameless conversation is a tacit reproof to a wicked neighbour; the shame of being outdone  
I often



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often reclaims a sinner from his evil way. Thus a daily attendant on divine service, and a constant communicant, is a standing reproof to those that neglect both. A man of extensive brotherly love touches the heart, and sometimes cures the uncharitable of his Jewish narrow way of thinking. A just person, that satisfies all legal demands, *owing no man any thing*, but that easy debt of *loving his neighbour as himself*, makes the *ungodly that borroweth, and payeth not again*, blush at his own iniquity, whilst conscience inwardly reproaches him for his injustice. So the chaste conversation of the modest puts even the lewd to shame, checks his *corrupt communication*, and often does the work of a preacher to the *whoremongers and adulterers*.

Thus God is glorified by example, and the cause of virtue insensibly promoted. Hence the Apostle said, *Abstain from fleshly lusts, having your conversation honest among the gentiles, that they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation*, 1 Pet. ii. 12.

2dly, God's glory is advanced by the example of a good life, because it defeats

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feats the devil in his devices against Christ's kingdom of grace. The sons of Infidelity, with the assistance of *Satan*, are always trying to eclipse the light of the Gospel by profaneness, by painting vice in different shapes to deceive the hearts of the simple, by calling evil good, and good evil.

But when men of signal holiness stand in the gap, and oppose all those wicked attempts with the *breast-plate of faith, righteousness and truth*, the brave defenders of religion break the power of the adversary, and triumph in virtue and goodness; but the glory of the conquest redounds to God, who raises up, and by his grace enables such Christian Heroes *to fight the good fight*; and accordingly to encourage such exemplary faith and piety, we find in Scripture that God always distinguish'd those with marks of blessing and favour, who distinguish'd themselves in his cause with godly behaviour. For he saved *Noah and his family* from the flood for his peculiar righteousness, *Lot* from the destruction of *Sodom* for his unspotted conversation, and *Job* from a train of evils to a perfect recovery of his health and substance for his patience; and reserved crowns of righteousness for all the

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the christian Apostles and Martyrs, who lived and died as examples of faith and virtue, with their lights shining before men, bright in life by good works, and brighter in death by expiring in the flames of persecution; these *tho' dead,* yet *speak* by example.

Thus have I gladly contributed my share of regard to this day's assembly, which beginning upon a principle of gratitude and love, will, I hope, go on in unanimity, innocence, and order. 'Tis now high time (I fear you think it so) to draw this discourse to a conclusion; but before I dismiss you, give me leave to subjoin one more remark by way of advice, *viz.* That, as since the days of your education you are transplanted from school, to grow and flourish in different soils in the great garden of life, you will labour by probity and diligence to show forth good fruit unto perfection, that the *place* of your instruction may receive some honour, and the *tree* have the pleasure to see its branches bear much fruit.

And as in the course of your education you have read many authors in both the school-languages with taste and improvement, and perhaps retain in your memories



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ries some beauties and curious observations in those classical books; yet still remember and prefer the great book of eternal life, the Scriptures. *Them search, them read;* and from their sacred authority, from the excellence of their doctrine and precepts, let the word of God be the only infallible rule of your faith and practice. I shall therefore leave upon your minds a few sentences from that divine Revelation, which carry more weight in the scale of your present and eternal happiness, than all the *Greek* and *Latin* lines that have pass'd between us. They are only these plain injunctions: *Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth—Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ—Be sound in the faith, and show your faith by your works—Fear God, honour the King, love the Brotherhood.* Amen.

